



Andy Purvis

Independent Special Education Advisor

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Background and experience:

I qualified as a teacher in 2008 and began my career in a mainstream secondary school, teaching History, Geography and Religious Studies at Key Stages 3 and 4, alongside A Level History, Citizenship and Law. Early in my career, I demonstrated strong leadership potential and was appointed Head of Year 11 in my third year of teaching. In this role, I was responsible for the daily pastoral care, safeguarding, behaviour support and academic progress of a large cohort of students, working closely with families and external agencies to secure positive outcomes.

Alongside my teaching career, I served as a Special Constable with Northumbria Police. This experience significantly strengthened my understanding of safeguarding, vulnerability, trauma and behaviour, and informed my calm, consistent and relational approach to behaviour management within education. In my final year at this school, I was appointed Acting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo), further broadening my leadership responsibilities and strategic understanding of inclusive practice. During this period, I also completed a master's degree in Teaching and Learning at Northumbria University. I was graded as an outstanding practitioner by Ofsted, recognised for my enthusiasm, insight and impact within the educational setting.

I subsequently moved to another mainstream secondary school, where I was appointed SENDCo, a role I held for eight years. In this capacity, I had strategic oversight of SEND provision across the school, including the leadership and management of an Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for students with moderate learning difficulties. My work focused on improving the quality of education, inclusion and outcomes for students with a wide range of additional needs including learning and executive function difficulties, physical disabilities, sensory impairment, ADHD and ASD, and this provision was commended by Ofsted as highly effective.

During this time, I developed and embedded a multi-strand, evidence-informed approach to SEND provision, underpinned by a Person-Centred ethos and a holistic view of the child. By focusing on the academic, social, emotional and developmental needs of students, we were able to reduce barriers to learning, increase engagement with the curriculum and

support students to achieve their personal aspirations. I designed and implemented robust systems for identification, monitoring and accountability, ensuring provision was both effective and reflective.

I worked extensively across Key Stages and in partnership with a wide range of professionals, including educational psychologists, health colleagues and social care. I trained as a Thrive Practitioner, further developing my expertise in supporting students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, particularly those arising from adverse childhood experiences. I also worked closely with Local Authority colleagues to co-design and implement a graduated SEND identification pathway, which was successfully rolled out across all schools within the authority. Additionally, I contributed to the development of an online Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) application platform, improving the efficiency, transparency and timeliness of needs assessment and review processes.

Alongside whole-school SEND leadership, I have managed an Additionally Resourced Maintained School (ARMS) provision for students with autism, which expanded from 16 to 21 places under my leadership. I championed a whole-school approach to inclusion, embedding the principle that all staff are responsible for the progress and wellbeing of students with SEND. I adopted and further developed the *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants* (MITA) research, creating collaborative, joined-up approaches between teachers and skilled support staff. This, combined with the implementation of time-limited, evidence-based interventions, led to outstanding progress for students with SEND. Ofsted noted that the support for pupils with SEND was exceptional and that pupils with SEND made exceptional progress.

Outside of education, I have also worked as a Customer Service Manager within the Department for Work and Pensions. In this role, I managed teams supporting young adults into training and employment, developed new systems for processing benefit claims, and travelled nationally to support the successful rollout of service improvements. This experience strengthened my operational leadership, change management and workforce development skills.

Across my career, I have developed extensive experience supporting students with a wide range of disabilities, including complex and rare conditions, within mainstream settings. I have worked closely with NHS and Social Care colleagues to coordinate support, contribute to multi-agency planning and secure positive long-term outcomes for young people and their families.

I am an experienced trainer with a proven ability to engage and motivate teachers and support staff to deliver high-quality inclusive practice. I have significant expertise in adaptive teaching strategies, promoting independence, and supporting young people's Preparation for Adulthood. I have delivered training within initial teacher education programmes, contributed to research with Newcastle University on anxiety and autism, and was invited to deliver specialist training at the Royal Victoria Infirmary on supporting students affected by cancer. I have also worked with a range of local and national charities to support families in navigating the SEND system.

In addition, I have extensive experience supporting students with a range of ability levels through key transition points, particularly into further education, apprenticeships and university, providing high-quality careers guidance and support with Post-16 applications.

Throughout my work in both education and policing, I have consistently adopted restorative and trauma-informed approaches to behaviour. I have supported professionals to understand behaviour as communication, rooted in unmet need, neurodiversity or mental health. I have worked directly with young people as a mentor, helping them to process trauma, develop emotional regulation strategies and build the skills needed to manage impulsivity and thrive within their communities.

I have extensive experience of ensuring that SEND provision is compliant with relevant legislation and Ofsted frameworks. I am confident in evidencing impact through robust data, case studies and quality assurance processes.

I have coached and mentored new SENDCo's and middle leaders from across the North East, working with individual schools and Multi Academy trusts to strengthen their SEND provision. I participated in the Inclusion in Practice research as part of the RISE programme which identified high performing inclusive schools, I contributed best practice and lessons learned to support the national work in improving inclusion in schools.

Professional Qualifications and Memberships:

- BA Hons Archaeology- Newcastle University- 2004
- Post Graduate Certificate in Secondary Education- Newcastle University- 2009
- Masters in Teaching and Learning- Northumbria University- 2013
- National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination- Sunderland University- 2015.